

Welcome to the NOCP Applicant Information Session!

- **Session Length:** 70 - 90 minutes followed by Q&A session
- This session is being recorded; the recording will be sent out to all who registered after the event
- Submit all questions via the chat during the presentation
- Moderator will compile and share chat questions with presenters
- At the start of the Q&A session, we will unlock the microphones for live questions
- Questions not addressed during the session will be answered afterward and shared along with the PowerPoint
- All referenced links and resources will be included in the PowerPoint





Office of
**CONSERVATION
INVESTMENT**

*Partnering to fund conservation
and connect people with nature*

National Outreach and Communications Program: Notice of Funding Opportunity Grant Application Information Session

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Agenda

1. National Outreach and Communications Program (**NOCP**) Statutory Purposes and Expected Outcomes
2. Essential Application Resources
3. Navigating the Notice of Funding Opportunity (**NOFO**)
4. Funding Availability & Grant Periods
5. Eligibility – Applicants & Activities
6. Application Checklist Content
7. Project Narrative Content
8. Merit Review & Scoring
9. Budget Information
10. Next Steps: Selection Process
11. Questions?

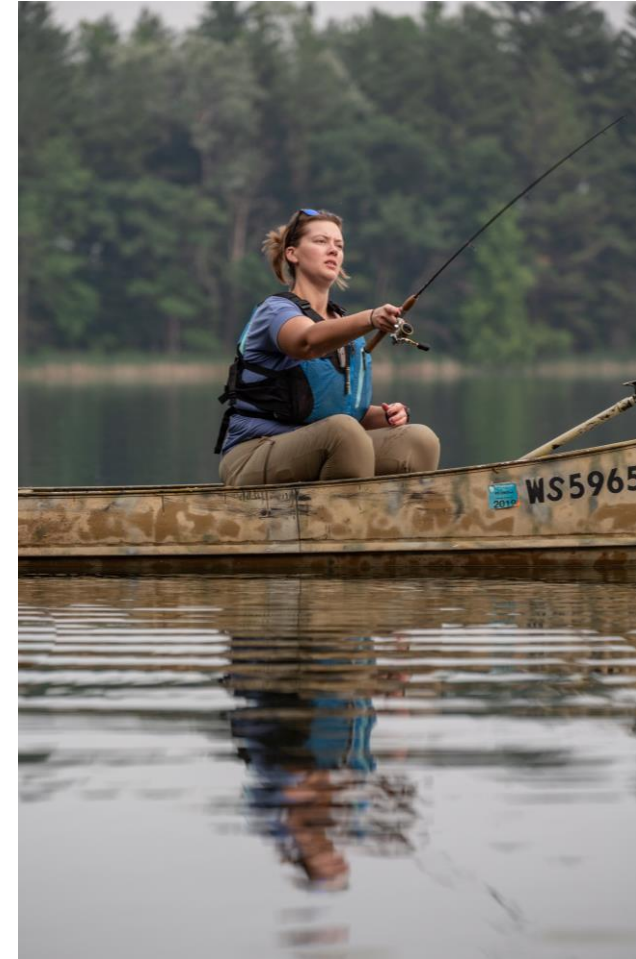


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Background and Overview

National Outreach and Communications Program

- Established by the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C. § 777g(d))
- Funded through the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund
- Administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Supports outreach and communications to sustain recreational fishing & boating participation



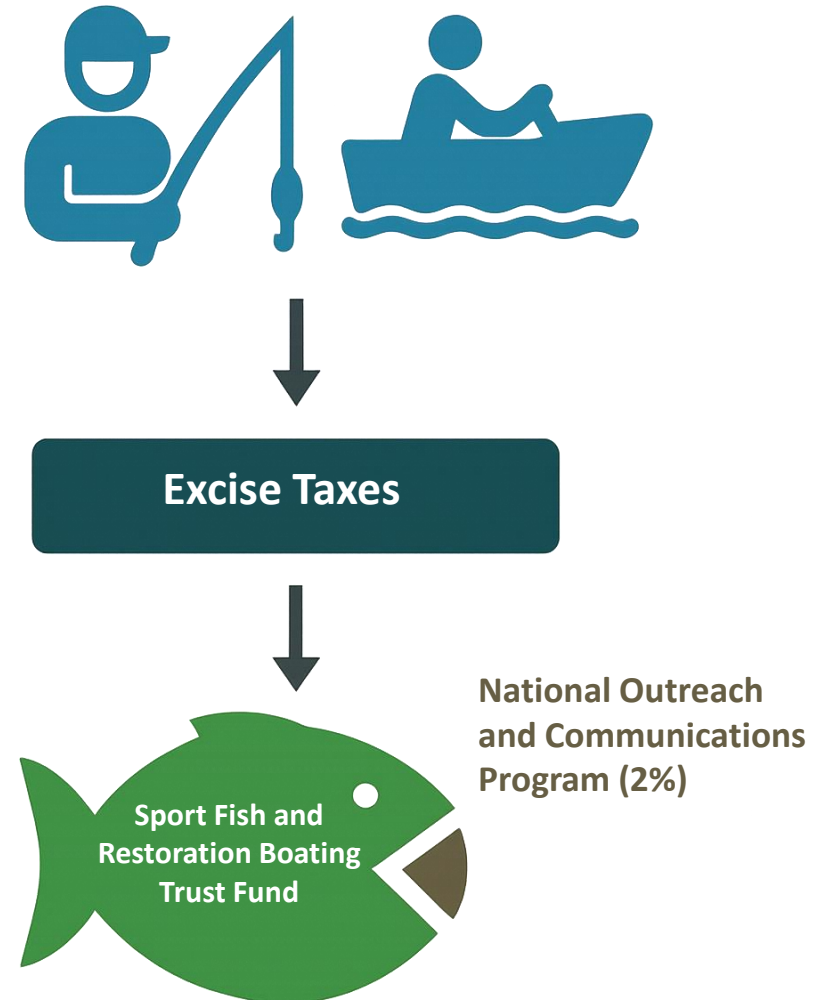
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NOCP at a Glance

A Visionary Investment in America's Aquatic Heritage

- Designed to increase participation in fishing and boating
- Promotes conservation, access, and safety
- Built on a simple principle: User Pay, User Benefit

Manufacturers, Importers, & Motorboat Fuel

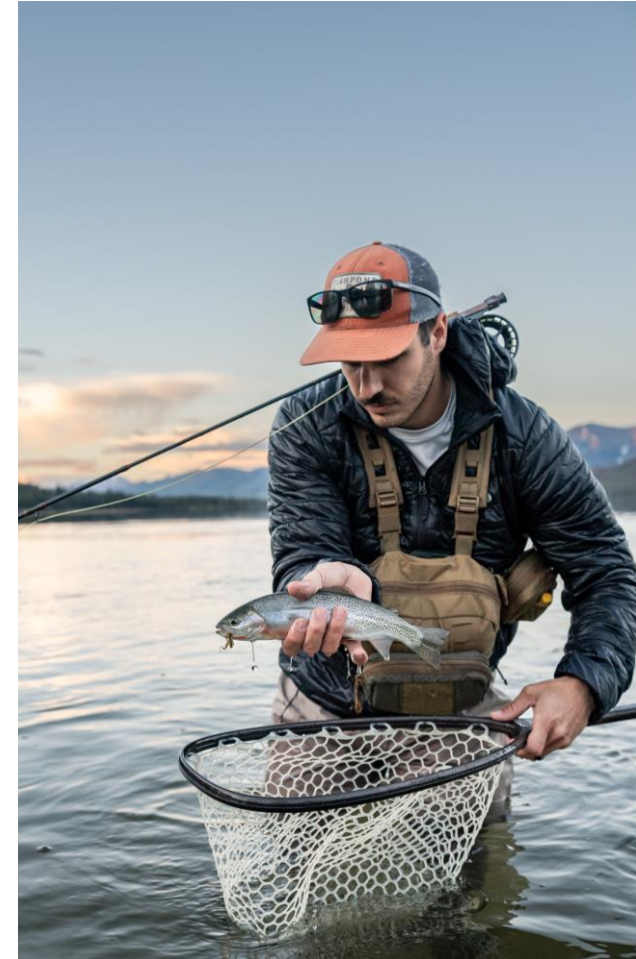


Why it Matters

Healthy Fisheries, Strong Communities, Lasting Traditions

- Recreational fishing and boating fuel local economies
- Participation drives conservation through license and registration revenue
- Outreach ensures long-term engagement with aquatic resources

America is home to some of the healthiest fisheries in the world. The NOCP helps keep it that way.



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What We're Looking For

Think Big. Build Smart. Align with What Works

- Build on decades of R3 research and proven outreach strategies
- Contribute to the long-term sustainability of fishing and boating
- Deliver measurable outcomes, not just activity
- Reflect meaningful partnerships and stakeholder alignment
- Advance the statutory purposes of the NOCP

We want to fund the next generation of **bold, collaborative, and scalable** efforts that drive real impact.



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Statutory Purposes

Applications must address one or more of the five purposes* of an outreach and communications program:

- **improve** communications with anglers, boaters, and the general public regarding angling and boating opportunities;
- **reduce** barriers to access and participation in angling and boating activities;
- **advance** the adoption of sound angling and boating practices in the U.S.;
- **promote** conservation and the responsible use of the nation's aquatic resources; and
- **further** safety in angling and boating.

* As defined in the Sportfishing and Boating Safety Act of 1998 (16 U.S.C.777c-777g)

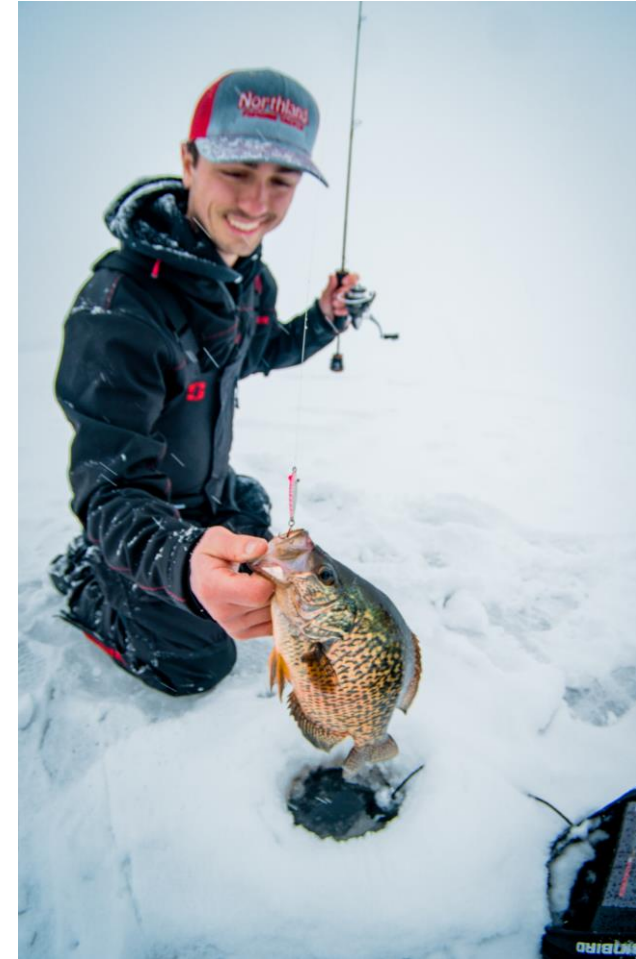


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Expected Outcomes

Funded efforts are expected to support at least one of the following key outcomes:

- **increased** participation in fishing and boating;
- **enhanced** public awareness and education about how and where to engage in these activities;
- **targeted** outreach using research-driven messaging;
- **strengthened** capacity among stakeholders to deliver effective outreach; and
- **improved** awareness of access to fishing and boating opportunities.



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NOCP Essential Application Resources

*****Resources you must read and use to develop a competitive application:*****

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

- Instructions for how to apply.
- Read it carefully and follow all instructions!

NOFO Supplemental Information

- <https://www.fws.gov/service/national-outreach-and-communications-program>
- Link to the NOFO

Supplemental Scoring Criteria

*****Details here are not found in the NOFO!*****

- FAQs – Questions others have already asked about the program or application process.
- Link to NOCP Information Session Recording

SAM.gov

- Must have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) to register in GrantSolutions and apply!
- A UEI is a free 12-character alphanumeric code issued to organizations, businesses and individuals by SAM.gov.
- Register now if your organization is not already registered – can take months!
- Make sure your org's existing your registration has not expired.

GrantSolutions.gov

- If your organization is not registered, follow instructions in the NOFO under “Submission Instructions”.
- If your organization is registered, be sure YOU have a User Account under your organization so that you can submit an application.

• Navigating the NOFO

1. **Table of Contents:** Use hyperlinks to jump easily to sections.
2. **Basic Information:** Important information about funding availability; Max/min \$ requests; Contact information; NO MATCH requirement, and NOCP Executive Summary.
3. **Eligibility:** Who is eligible. Which activities are eligible, and which are not.
4. **Get Ready to Apply:** Overview of system registrations required for applying – SAM.gov and GrantSolutions.gov.
5. **Program Overview:** Concise summary of NOCP purpose and expectations for submitted applications. Your application should connect with the suggestions provided in this section.
6. **Prepare Your Application:**
 - **Application Checklist!** Lists all forms and documents that are required in your application. Review this list before you hit submit!
 - Detailed instructions describing Project Narrative and Budget Narrative required content.
 - Describes expectations for Indirect Cost Management and associated opportunity for bonus points.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Notice of Funding Opportunity

F26AS00014 National Outreach and Communications Program

Funding Opportunity Number

F26AS00014

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Navigating the NOFO – continued

7. Submission Requirements and Deadlines:

- Applications are ***due in GrantSolutions.gov no later than 11:59 pm ET on August 17, 2025.***
- Provides instructions for registering your organization and your organization's users in GrantSolutions.

8. Application Review Information:

- Describes **Eligibility Review** and factors that may cause an application to be removed from the process.
- Describes the **Merit Review** process:
 - Includes 7 scoring criteria and bonus points. Be sure to check the [Supplemental Scoring Criteria](#) for additional details NOT found in the NOFO in this section.
 - Describes a National Review Panel, comprised on 8 subject-matter experts, that will score and rank proposals that it recommends to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director for funding.

9. Award Notices: Describes anticipated announcement date for selected awards, October 1, 2025.

10. Post Award Requirements and Administration: Provides links to standard Terms and Conditions and describes reporting requirements that will be in effect for issued awards.

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Funding Availability & Grant Periods

Estimated Total Program Funding:

- \$26,000,000 across two fiscal years
- Ranging from \$10M-\$14M per FY depending on funding generated from excise taxes

Award Ceiling: Maximum amount that may be requested:

- \$26M, i.e., max \$13M per year for two years

Award Floor: Minimum amount requested:

- \$100,000

Cost Sharing/Match:

- NOT required
- NO merit review points for voluntary cost-share.

Anticipated Amount per Award:

- \$5 million per year for a single application.
- Greater requests should demonstrate exceptional need, scale, and national impact.

Grant or Cooperative Agreement Period:

- 1 to 2 years

Multi-year awards:

- Funds obligated on an annual basis.
- Actual amounts available may vary depending on excise taxes generated.
- Must submit updated budgets annually to reflect actual funding allocations.
- May be required to revise project budget and timeline accordingly.

Funding Bands Explained

• A Guide for Project Scope & Budget Range

Purpose: Funding bands help applicants determine the appropriate budget range based on project scope and geographic scope.

- Demonstrate how your proposal aligns with the selected band and describe the impact of the project across the geographic area proposed.
- May not request less than \$100k but may request less than the band's minimum for Bands 2 and 3.
- If you propose a project that is greater than the band's maximum, the need should be clearly demonstrated.

Band 1 – Local scope: \$100,000 to \$500,000 total; carried out within a community, municipality, county or other local jurisdiction.

Band 2 – State or Regional scope: \$500,000 to \$5,000,000 total; carried out statewide or across multiple states. There are no specific regions, states or zip codes defined as targets.

- **Examples:** Regions of a cooperating agency or organization; Regions of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Great Lakes states or Atlantic or Pacific coastal states; some other group of states; etc.

Band 3 – National scope: \$5,000,000 to \$26,000,000 total; scope should have an impact, reach, relevance or benefit to states across the United States.

- **Examples:** All or most of the 50 states, and may also include D.C, Puerto Rico, Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.

Eligible Applicants

✓ State governments	✓ housing authorities	✓ Individuals
✓ County governments	✓ Native American tribal organizations (other than Federally recognized tribal governments)	✓ For profit organization other than small businesses
✓ City or township governments		✓ Small businesses
✓ Special district governments	✓ Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education	✓ Unrestricted (i.e., open to any type of entity above), subject to any clarification in text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility"
✓ Independent school districts	✓ Nonprofits without 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education	✓ Others (see "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)
✓ Public and State controlled institutions of higher education	✓ Private institutions of higher education	
✓ Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)		
✓ Public housing authorities/Indian		

Additional Information on Eligibility

Eligible applicants are those with experience in addressing one or more of the five primary purposes of the NOCP and experience with the following:

planning and executing local, state, regional, or national marketing campaigns or outreach programs, **and**

identifying and engaging audiences to increase awareness, participation, and behavior change in outdoor recreation, aquatic conservation, or fishing and boating activities.



Eligible Activities

Activities that support at least one of the five statutory purposes and at least one of the expected outcomes, and may include:

- ✓ Fishing and boating marketing campaigns
- ✓ Influencer and other social media campaigns
- ✓ Information and awareness signage or print materials
- ✓ Web-based or app-based tools
- ✓ Instructional videos
- ✓ Toolkits
- ✓ Hands-on learning or training workshops
- ✓ Public programs or events
- ✓ Marketing and social science research and surveys



Ineligible Activities

Ineligible activities include, but are not limited to:

- ⊗ Use of non-motorized watercraft, such as kayaks, canoes and paddleboards, UNLESS directly associated with fishing activities - must demonstrate clear connection with fishing.
- ⊗ Land acquisition
- ⊗ Construction or renovation of infrastructure
- ⊗ Revenue generation as the primary purpose, including includes all processes and procedures directly related to printing, distribution, issuance or sale of licenses, permits or registrations
 - ✓ May use the number of licenses, permits and registrations issued as a measure of or to track trends in participation in fishing and boating
- ⊗ Establishment of laws and regulations
- ⊗ Law enforcement activities, i.e., enforcement of fish and wildlife laws and regulations
- ⊗ Promoting opposition to regulated taking of fish

Presidential Actions and DOI Secretary's Orders

Applicants must review current and applicable Executive Orders and Department of the Interior (DOI) Secretarial Orders prior to applying.

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their proposed activities are consistent with the intent and requirements of these directives (such as, but not limited to EO 14168 and EO 14173)

Presidential Actions

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/>

Department of the Interior Secretary's Orders

<https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order>

GrantSolutions: Application Control Checklist

1. Log in to GrantSolutions
2. Click “Funding Opportunities” in menu banner
3. Search in list for F26AS00014 (scan through or use ctrl-F)
4. Click “Apply” button to the right of F26AS00014.
5. Complete online forms and upload attachments.
6. Click “Verify Submission”
7. Review Application list of forms and attachments.
8. Click “Final Submission”.

“Verify Submission”, then
“Final Submission” when
ready to submit

GrantSolutions Application Control Checklist

Work in Progress

This is your GrantSolutions Application Control Checklist (EACC). You will use the EACC to track the status of your application.


To complete your application electronically, enter information by using the online forms and/or adding attachments (upload/mail-in). Required items are noted by the exclamation point image. If an enclosure has not been verified, a red 'X' image is displayed.

To review the grant announcement and application kit details, including all guidance and requirements, please click [here](#).

Please verify that all documents submitted with the application package appear as expected in the Original Submission PDF. Not all file types may accurately print to PDF.

Print Application:

[Original Submission](#)

Applicant
Application Number (To be assigned) 
Program F000 - US Fish and Wildlife Service
Announcement [F26AS00014 National Outreach and Communications Program](#)
Service Area WSFR R9 -HQ
Project Title
Due Date 08/17/2025 11:59 PM (GMT - 05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)

Additional Information to be Submitted	Enclosure(s)	Attachment(s)	Status
Other		0 Uploaded Files 0 Mail-in Items	
Project Narrative	Enter Comments View PDF View Original Version	0 Uploaded Files 0 Mail-in Items	
Online Forms	Enclosure(s)	Attachment(s)	Status
Project Abstract Summary (Version 2.0)	Enter Online Enter Comments	0 Uploaded Files 0 Mail-in Items	
SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance (Version 4.0)	Enter Online	N/A	
SF-424A Budget Information - Non-Construction	Enter Online	0 Uploaded Files 0 Mail-in Items	
SF-LLL Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (Version 2.0)	Enter Online	0 Uploaded Files 0 Mail-in Items	

Application Package Status: Work in Progress

[Verify Submission](#)

[Close](#)

Status changes to
green checkmark
online form
completed or files
uploaded

Upload
Attachments

Complete
Online
Forms

Grants.gov: Workspace Application

[Home](#) [Learn Grants](#) [Search Grants](#) [Applicants](#) [Grantors](#) [System-To-System](#) [Forms](#) [Connect](#) [Support](#)

VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

[View similar opportunities](#)

F26AS00014

F26AS00014 National Outreach and Communications Program

Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service

Apply

Subscribe

SYNOPSIS

VERSION HISTORY

RELATED DOCUMENTS

PACKAGE

General Information

Document Type:

Grants Notice

Version:

Synopsis 1

Funding Opportunity Number:

F26AS00014

Posted Date:

Jun 18, 2025

Funding Opportunity Title:

F26AS00014 National Outreach and Communications Program

Last Updated

Jun 18, 2025

If the apply button is grayed out, it may be because your organization and the person who administers grants for your organization has not given you access.

Grants.gov: Application Control Checklist

FORMS VIEW APPLICATION ATTACHMENTS PARTICIPANTS ACTIVITY DETAILS

Workspace Actions:

Check Application

Sign and Submit

Delete

Application Package Forms - Users are encouraged to follow [antivirus best practices](#) when Downloading Instructions and Forms:

Download Instructions »



Include in Package	Form Name (Click to Edit)	Requirement	Form Status	Last Updated Date/Time	Locked By	Actions
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424) [V4.0]	Mandatory	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project Narrative Attachment Form [V1.2]	Mandatory	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Project Abstract Summary [V2.0]	Mandatory	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform
<input type="checkbox"/>	Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A) [V1.0]	Optional	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform
<input type="checkbox"/>	Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) [V2.0]	Optional	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attachments [V1.2]	Optional	---	---	---	Lock Download Upload Reuse Webform

GrantSolutions: Application Checklist

Application Required Elements	GrantSolutions: Use Online Form or Upload Docs	Submission Requirement
1) SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance	SF-424 Use Online Form	Required from all applicants; form provided in GrantSolutions.gov
2) SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	SF-424A Use Online Form	Required for non-construction projects; form provided in GrantSolutions.gov
3) SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	SF-LLL Use Online Form	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds and the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
4) Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The purpose of this project... • Activities to be performed... • Expected deliverables and/or outcomes... • Intended beneficiaries include... • Subrecipient activities (if applicable) include... 	Project Abstract Summary Use Online Form	Required from all applicants; form provided in GrantSolutions.gov <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,000-character limit including spaces • Spell out acronyms first time mentioned • Do not use special characters • Will be posted on USASpending.gov
5) Project Narrative	Project Narrative Upload Docs	Required from all applicants. There is no form or template; however, applicants must include information outlined under “Project Narrative”.

GrantSolutions: Application Checklist (continued)

Application Required Elements	GrantSolutions: Enter Online Form or Upload Docs	Submission Requirement
6) Budget Narrative	Other Upload Docs	Required from all applicants. There is no form or template; however, applicants must include information outlined under “Budget Narrative”.
7) Conflict of Interest	Other Upload Docs	Required from all applicants. There is no form or template; however, applicants must include information outlined under “Conflict of Interest”. If not applicable, confirm by stating “not applicable” in the application.
8) Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement	Other Upload Docs	Required from all applicants. There is no form or template; however, applicants must include information outlined under “Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement ”. If not applicable, confirm by stating “not applicable” in the application.
9) Letters of Support or Commitment	Other Upload Docs	Required if applicable to program/project scope of work.
10) Supporting Documentation	Other Upload Docs	Required if applicable to program/project scope
11) Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)	Other Upload Docs	Required, if applicable to the applicant.

Project Narrative - Tips

No template.

Create your own document but be sure to include all bulleted headings and required information (provided under "Project Narrative" section of the NOFO on pages 11-14).

Clarity is key!

Make it easy for reviewers to find information that is required. Keep information in each section relevant to that section's heading.

Level of Detail

Concise, but sufficient detail for reviewers to:

- Determine eligibility
- Assess whether activities are appropriate and realistic
- Assign appropriate scoring
- If funded, complete compliance under NEPA, ESA and NHPA

Scoring Details

Be sure to cross-check your project narrative and budget narrative with scoring details to ensure you've clearly provided information that will maximize points awarded by reviewers.



- NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act
- ESA = Endangered Species Act
- NHPA = National Historic Preservation Act

Project Narrative – Required Content

Project Overview. Brief summary of your project's purpose, objectives and intended outcomes.

Project Title. Provide a brief but descriptive title. Example: *Engaging Young Adults in Great Lakes Fishing*

Project Location. Identify the geographic scope (e.g., local, state, regional, or national) and indicate the city, state(s), or region, as relevant to your project scope.

Applicant Description. Describe the organization(s) undertaking the project, including relevant experience, mission, and capacity to deliver outreach and communications programs. ***Eligibility Alert!***

Personnel. Identify individuals essential to the project, with a summary of their qualifications, roles, and relevance to project success. ***Eligibility Alert!***



Project Narrative – Required Content (2)

Needs Statement. Describe specific need, challenge, or opportunity the project aims to address.

- Be concise!
- **Provide evidence and facts**, not hyperbole and emotion.
- Describe how your project fulfills one or more of the five NOCP purposes.
- Do not describe Objectives or Approach/Methods in this section.

Objectives. Use SMART Objectives = Specific. Measurable. Attainable. Relevant. Time-bound.

- **EXAMPLE:** Conduct 21 surf fishing workshops in 7 states by December 31, 2026
- May have one or more objectives.
- Each objective should be stated as a sentence.
- **Be realistic!** Do not embellish numbers for competitive edge. Reviewers may judge your project as unrealistic.

Approach. Describe methods that will be used to achieve your stated objectives.

- **What** activities that will be carried out, **how**, **where** (include maps or GIS data, as applicable), **when** (specify dates or date ranges), and **by whom** (including roles for contractors or subrecipients, if involved).
- How will progress be measured (e.g., surveys, digital analytics, license or registration data)?
- Include sufficient details for compliance determination.
- **POINTS ALERT!** Innovation and R3 Best Practices: Specifically highlight any use of Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation (R3) strategies or innovative approaches grounded in research and best practices.



Project Narrative –Required Content (3)

Alignment with Program Goals. Describe how the proposed project addresses one or more of the five NOCP statutory purposes:

- improve communication with anglers, boaters and the general public regarding angling and boating opportunities
- reduce barriers to access and participation in these activities
- advance the adoption of sound angling and boating practices
- promote conservation and the responsible use of the nation's aquatic resources
- further safety in fishing and boating

Expected Results and Benefits. Explain how your project will contribute to one or more of the following outcomes expected, on a short and/or long-term basis:

- Increased participation in recreational boating and fishing
- Enhanced public awareness and education about how and where to engage in these activities
- Targeted outreach using research-driven messaging
- Strengthened capacity among stakeholders to deliver effective outreach
- Improved awareness of access to fishing and boating opportunities

Timeline. Provide a project schedule identifying major milestones and deliverables.

- Demonstrate your project is feasible within the grant period.
- May be presented as a chart or bulleted list.



Project Narrative – Required Content (4)

Stakeholder Coordination and Community Engagement

- ✓ Demonstrate strong and innovative community engagement and stakeholder coordination.
- ✓ Must demonstrate alignment with conservation priorities, regulatory frameworks, and strategic plans of public agencies with jurisdiction over the resources or locations involved.
- ✓ **Letters of Support or Commitment:**
 - Upload and submit as attachments, as applicable.
- ✓ **Examples include:**
 - Local small businesses, including outfitters, tackle shops, guides, boat rental operators, and other recreation-related enterprises
 - Chambers of commerce and tourism boards
 - Educational institutions such as community colleges, land-grant universities, or tribal colleges
 - Civic groups, volunteer organizations, or other grassroots networks with a connection to aquatic recreation, conservation, or public education



Project Narrative – Required Content (5)

Deliverables	Federal Involvement or Technical Assistance Needs	Regulatory Compliance	Supporting Documentation
<p>List and briefly describe any products such as: Engagement tools, training materials, campaign summaries, research or survey reports or publications, photo and video collections, marketing templates, toolkits, presentations and webinars</p> <p>Describe how intended users will receive access.</p> <p>If funded, must submit all deliverables to FWS, including all photos and video footage not used in final products.</p>	<p>If applicable, describe any anticipated needs for federal substantial involvement, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technical assistance• Collaboration• Data sharing• Other coordination with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service staff	<p>Provide information supporting the following, if applicable:</p> <p>Environmental Compliance (ESA, NEPA, NHPA): Include specific locations where activities will be performed. Describe any ground disturbance or field activities away from already developed sites.</p> <p>Permits: Identify any local, state, or federal permits that may be required to carry out proposed activities. E.g., event permits, public land use authorizations, fish and wildlife handling or filming permits, or other regulatory permissions.</p> <p>Executive Orders: All applications must comply with all current Executive Orders.</p>	<p>Briefly list and describe any materials provided as attachments to the Project Narrative, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Letters of support or commitment✓ Maps✓ Other information that helps illustrate your proposed work, as applicable.

2026 NOCP Review Criteria

Review Process

National Review Team of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may include relevant state, federal or industry organizations. Each reviewer will apply Scoring Criteria

Review Criteria

Each section outlines the evaluation category, describes what reviewers will consider, and details how points may be awarded based on application quality.

Criteria	Maximum Points
Strategic Alignment	20
R3 Outcomes and Best Practices	10
Innovation	10
Measurable Outcomes and Evaluation Plan	20
Stakeholder Coordination	20
Feasibility	10
Impact Potential	10
Bonus: Indirect Cost Management	5
Total Possible Points:	105

Supplemental Scoring Criteria (EXAMPLE)

<https://www.fws.gov/page/2026-nocp-supplemental-scoring-criteriaExample>

Strategic Alignment - Maximum Points 20

How well does the application address one or more of the five statutory purposes of the NOCP? The five statutory purposes are:

- Improve communication about angling and boating opportunities
- Reduce barriers to participation
- Advance sound angling and boating practices
- Promote conservation and responsible use
- Further safety in fishing and boating

Scoring scale:

- **0 Points:** Does not address any of the five purposes.
- **5 Points:** Provides brief or vague references to one or more of the purposes, and lacks sufficient detail regarding needs, objectives, and methods, demonstrating a superficial understanding of the purposes.
- **10 Points:** Describes one or more of the purposes but has limited details describing the need, objectives, or methods, leaving some degree of doubt in ability to address the purposes as proposed.
- **15 Points:** Addresses one or more of the purposes with a compelling needs statement and relevant objectives and approach, but some details are lacking leaving some, but not all, aspects of addressing the purposes incomplete.
- **20 Points:** Clearly addresses one or more of the purposes with a well-defined need statement, clear objectives, and detailed practical approach that reflects a comprehensive, strong plan for addressing the purposes.

Aligning the Project Narrative to the Scoring Criteria

Scoring Criteria (Pts)	Suggested Key Narrative Sections & Information
1. Strategic Alignment (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Project Overview: Name which statutory purpose(s) you address.•Alignment with Program Goals: Use the exact five-purpose language to mirror the rubric.
2. R3 Outcomes & Best Practices (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Approach: Call out each activity's Recruitment, Retention, or Reactivation element.•Innovation & R3 Best Practices: Cite relevant research or case studies.
3. Innovation (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Approach: Highlight new technologies, creative partnerships, or novel outreach methods.•Innovation & R3 Best Practices: Describe unique concepts or adaptations.
4. Measurable Outcomes & Evaluation Plan (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Objectives: List SMART objectives tied to program outcomes.•Approach: Detail data collection methods and monitoring checkpoints.•Expected Results & Benefits: Link activities to both short- and long-term metrics.
5. Stakeholder Coordination (20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Stakeholder Coordination & Community Engagement: Detail partner roles, co-design efforts, and reference letters of support.•Applicant Description / Key Personnel: Note formal MOUs or past collaborations.
6. Feasibility (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Timeline: Present a realistic schedule of milestones and deliverables.•Applicant Description & Key Personnel: Demonstrate organizational capacity.•Approach: Clarify roles, responsibilities, and resources.
7. Impact Potential (10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Needs Statement: Explain broader need and scaling potential.•Expected Results & Benefits: Describe replicability or broader reach of the approach.
8. Bonus: Indirect Cost Management (5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Budget Narrative (reference): State NICRA or de minimis rate and provide justification.•Feasibility / Approach: Explain how indirect costs support efficient project delivery.

SF-424 Application for Federal Assistance

Box 17: Enter Project
Start date of 1/1/26

View Burden Statement

OMB Number: 4040-0004
Expiration Date: 11/30/2025

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 1. Type of Submission:**
☐ Preapplication
☐ Application
☐ Changed/Corrected Application

*** 2. Type of Application:**
☐ New
☐ Continuation
☐ Revision

* If Revision, select appropriate letter(s):

* Other (Specify):

*** 3. Date Received:**

4. Applicant Identifier:

5a. Federal Entity Identifier:

5b. Federal Award Identifier:

State Use Only:

6. Date Received by State:

7. State Application Identifier:

8. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

*** a. Legal Name:**

*** b. Employer/Taxpayer Identification Number (EIN/TIN):**

*** c. UEI:**

d. Address:

*** Street1:**

Street2:

*** City:**

County/Parish:

*** State:**

Province:

*** Country:**

*** Zip / Postal Code:**

e. Organizational Unit:

Department Name:

Division Name:

f. Name and contact information of person to be contacted on matters involving this application:

Prefix:

*** First Name:**

Middle Name:

*** Last Name:**

Suffix:

Title:

Organizational Affiliation:

*** Telephone Number:**

Fax Number:

*** Email:**

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

*** 9. Type of Applicant 1: Select Applicant Type:**

Type of Applicant 2: Select Applicant Type:

Type of Applicant 3: Select Applicant Type:

* Other (specify):

*** 10. Name of Federal Agency:**

11. Assistance Listing Number:

Assistance Listing Title:

*** 12. Funding Opportunity Number:**

* Title:

13. Competition Identification Number:

Title:

14. Areas Affected by Project (Cities, Counties, States, etc.):

*** 15. Descriptive Title of Applicant's Project:**

Attach supporting documents as specified in agency instructions.

Box 15: Descriptive Title - Choose carefully; the title you enter here will be the official title used for the life of the award.

Application for Federal Assistance SF-424

16. Congressional Districts Of:

*** a. Applicant:**

*** b. Program/Project:**

Attach an additional list of Program/Project Congressional Districts if needed.

17. Proposed Project:

*** a. Start Date:**

*** b. End Date:**

18. Estimated Funding (\$):

*** a. Federal:**

*** b. Applicant:**

*** c. State:**

*** d. Local:**

*** e. Other:**

*** f. Program Income:**

*** g. TOTAL:**

*** 19. Is Application Subject to Review By State Under Executive Order:**

☐ a. This application was made available to the State under the Executive Order.

☐ b. Program is subject to E.O. 12372 but has not been selected by the State.

☐ c. Program is not covered by E.O. 12372.

*** 20. Is the Applicant Delinquent On Any Federal Debt? (If "Yes," provide explanation in attachment.)**

☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes", provide explanation and attach

21. *By signing this application, I certify (1) to the statements contained in the list of certifications and (2) that the statements herein are true, complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also provide the required assurances** and agree to comply with any resulting terms if I accept an award. I am aware that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent statements or claims may subject me to criminal, civil, or administrative penalties. (U.S. Code, Title 18, Section 1001)**

**** I AGREE**

** The list of certifications and assurances, or an internet site where you may obtain this list, is contained in the announcement or agency specific instructions.

Authorized Representative:

Prefix:

*** First Name:**

Middle Name:

*** Last Name:**

Suffix:

*** Title:**

*** Telephone Number:**

Fax Number:

*** Email:**

*** Signature of Authorized Representative:**

*** Date Signed:**

Box 18a: Enter total
Federal funds
requested in the first
funding line

SF-424A Budget Information – Non-construction Programs

- If requesting 2-year grant period, enter total funds for both years.
- Budget Narrative should correspond to the budget categories found on the SF-424A. Budget Narrative must include a budget table showing these categories for each year in separate columns.
- NOFO describes:
 - Which costs go under which budget category **and**
 - What must be included in your description for each budget category in the Budget Narrative

SECTION B - BUDGET CATEGORIES					
6. Object Class Categories	GRANT PROGRAM, FUNCTION OR ACTIVITY				Total (5)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	
a. Personnel	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
b. Fringe Benefits	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
c. Travel	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
d. Equipment	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
e. Supplies	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
f. Contractual	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
g. Construction	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
h. Other	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a-6h)	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
j. Indirect Charges	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>
7. Program Income	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>	\$ <input type="text"/>

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Budget Table Example for 2-year Grant Periods

- **No template:** Simply create a document following the NOFO instructions for required content. *If requesting 2-year grant period include **BUDGET TABLE** showing each year in a separate column.*
- **Describe costs that comprise each budget category.** If a cost category does not apply, say so.
- Demonstrate that your project is **cost-effective** and proposed costs are **necessary and reasonable** to accomplish objectives.
- Provide sufficient detail to demonstrate costs are **allowable** and **allocable**.

Budget Category		
	Year 1	Year 2
a. Personnel	\$233,243	\$77,750
b. Fringe Benefits	48,981	\$16,327
c. Travel	15,179	0
d. Equipment	20,000	32,000
e. Supplies	8,650	0
f. Contractual	60,000	0
g. Construction	0	0
h. Other	8,391	5,404
i. Total Direct Charges (sum of 6a - 6h)	394,444	131,481
j. Indirect Charges	70,556	23,519
k. TOTALS (sum of 6i and 6j)	465,000	155,000
7. Program Income	\$	\$

Budget Narrative Categories

Personnel - List positions involved, their role, salary, % time on project.

Fringe - Identify your approved rate and what is included (e.g., social security, employee life, health, unemployment, workers' compensation insurance, pension, and unemployment).

Travel - Who is traveling, why (role) and where. Include costs comprising travel estimates (e.g., lodging, per diem, airfare, rental car, etc.)

Equipment - Useful life >1 year and per-unit cost equal to or exceeding the lesser of your organization's established capitalization level or \$10,000.

Supplies - Items that do not meet the definition of Equipment. Computing devices may fall into this category.

Contractual - List and describe each contractual service including estimated value.

Other - List **Subawards**, Participant Support Costs, and other costs that may not fit into other categories. Describe details for each.

Indirect Charges - Describe your organization's Indirect Cost rate (i.e., NICRA, [de minimis](#)), including the actual % rate used and describe base costs upon which indirect is applied. **BONUS POINTS ALERT!**

Program Income - Describe how income will be earned and how it will be applied to the award (e.g., additive or deductive).

Allowable and Unallowable Costs

Allowable Costs

- Necessary and reasonable
- No double dipping – cannot include cost covered by another Federal program
- Adequately documented
- Incurred during the approved budget period
- “**Cost allocation**” methods must be described if a cost you propose will benefit other programs, projects or activities that are not part of your proposal.
- Other details about what is allowable and unallowable in [2 CFR 200.400 Cost Principles](#)

Unallowable Costs

- General Advertising and Public Relations
- Fundraising
- Lobbying
- Entertainment and alcoholic beverages
- Costs incurred outside the award period



Office of
**CONSERVATION
INVESTMENT**

Contractor vs. Subrecipient (Contract vs. Subaward)



- **BE AWARE!** [2 CFR 200.331](#) **Subrecipient and contractor determinations:** Provides information to guide determination. Describes characteristics of contractors vs. subrecipients.
- ***Substance and purpose of the relationship is more important than the form of agreement.*** Consider the participatory effort of the entity you are engaging in the project.
- **Contractor Characteristics:**
 - Provides the goods and services within normal business operations;
 - Provides **similar goods or services to many different purchasers**;
 - Normally operates in a competitive environment;
 - Provides **goods or services that are ancillary to the Federal award**; and
 - Is not subject to compliance requirements of the Federal program because of the agreement.
- **Subrecipient Characteristics:**
 - Has its performance measured in relation to whether **objectives of the project** were met;
 - Has **responsibility for programmatic decision-making**;
 - Responsible for adhering to requirements specified in the Federal award; and
 - Uses the Federal funds to **carry out the purpose of the project**, as opposed to providing goods or services for the benefit of the Federal award recipient.

Next Steps...

Applications Due - August 17, 2025, 11:59 pm ET

Eligibility Screening

- Applicant
- Application package complete
- Aligned with NOCP purposes
- Activities

Application Scoring and Ranking

- National Review Team of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, may include relevant state, federal or industry organizations
- Each reviewer will apply Scoring Criteria

Application Selection

- Ranked applications recommended for funding provided to Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- FWS Director makes final selections
- Final selections may be subject to additional review and approval by the U.S. Department of the Interior

Anticipated Selections Announcement - October 1, 2025

- Office of Conservation Investment Review
- Risk Review
- Detailed budget review
- Compliance Review
- Terms & Conditions
- Issue Notice of Award in GrantSolutions

Anticipated Award Start Dates - January 1, 2026

Questions?



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Thank you!